



Cross Sectional Attitudes of Public Sculpture Matrix in Southwestern Nigeria

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Abstract. Public outdoor sculpture practice in the Southwestern Nigeria entails different types of attitudes. These attitudes are discernable from the stage of commissioning of work, its conceptualization to the display and uses in the public sphere generated diverse fundamental, constant technical issues. Some are explicitly alluring while others are absurd, fleeting and injurious to the practice. However, whatever attitude advanced in the public outdoor sculpture practice, it has not been discussed cross sectionally. The inadequate scholarship attention on the attitudinal issues in outdoor sculpture certainly created art historical gap apt to make the study of contemporary Nigeria art incoherent. Apparently, attitudinal studies certainly involve psychological measurement - a type of instrument that does not required descriptive survey. For this reason, the study was based on qualitative methods. The study categorised various attitudes in outdoor sculpture practice in the studied area into pre-unveiling, unveiling and post unveiling stages and critically examined them. Some attitudes in the practice of the art were observed to be stimulant for advancement; invariably others are clearly incongruous to the spirit of typical Yoruba societal value orientation in orderliness, therefore degrading and detrimental to the development of the outdoor sculpture in the public sphere.

Keywords: *Art patron; cross sectional attitude; outdoor sculpture; post-unveiling; pre-unveiling; public art; Southwestern Nigeria; unveiling.*

1 Introduction

One of the features of the Yoruba social set-up is their urbanization [1]. Urbanization has its own sociological complexity on the people. High taste on issues of life, particularly the crave for uniqueness is one of such effects. In this case, its major effect on the Yoruba is of sophisticated taste and lofty order in mundane activities. Consequently, the Yoruba with high taste for beauty, generally, react to beauty by applauding it and conferring honours on the bearer of such perceived beauty. Numerous relics unearthed in *Ile-Ife*, *Owo*, *Esie* and the account of Oyo art given by Kalilu [2] attest to the Yoruba aesthetic and artistic sophistry. Careful observations on the works brought into light the high level of development in religion, socio-political, economic and technological achievements of the people.

In environmental beautification, according to Chief Oguntunbi, the *Osundurin* of Ife, Ile-Ife, the potsherd pavement was lavishly used during the reign of *Luwo* a queen in the ancient Ife. Kalilu [2] also vividly illustrates the feat achieved in Oyo in this realm. Today, efforts are still on-going among the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria to make their environment orderly and beautiful. Part of the efforts is the use of outdoor sculptures. The use of outdoor sculpture has also created an array of attitudes with which the works are produced, assessed and treated. These attitudes are wide-spread in the zone and it has affected the development of public outdoor sculpture. For this reason, it is good to understand the public attitude *vis-a-vis* the artists and the patrons for a better assessment of the public outdoor sculpture in the Southwestern Nigeria.

The acceptance of contemporary outdoor sculpture in the region is based upon certain criteria on which the fulfillment of its functions may be interrogated. Primarily, the major criteria still rest squarely on those used in treating forms, style, and theme in the traditional Yoruba woodcarving. However, in the extant art practice, western forms, styles, materials and technique have been accommodated and integrated into the traditional criteria in response to the dynamics of culture. These Yoruba aesthetic canons, which are specifically based on intrinsic and extrinsic aesthetic concept, have been discussed by many scholars [3], [4], [5], [6] and [7].

Information collected through interaction with stakeholders and the writer's participation in unveiling ceremonies *etcetra*, in respect of the Yoruba's attitude in assessment of works of art as of the ancient time is generally similar to today's attitude. However, certain sociological problem generally experienced in the country has reshaped the Yoruba value orientation in the assessment of government projects, particularly outdoor sculptures.

That notwithstanding, the Yoruba are appreciative of beauty. They respond to it vivaciously when they are satisfied. In the same vein, they openly disapprove of unappealing work. This attitude also applies to the assessment of outdoor sculptures among them. Aesthetic satisfaction in outdoor sculpture is usually expressed in different ways during and immediately after the unveiling ceremony. While some members of the public spontaneously pour encomiums on the artists and those who commissioned the work; others appreciate the subject expressed in the work. If however, the public is not satisfied, they do not hide their feelings. Such works, lacking in aesthetics appeal, are often derided. Disdainful names are given to the works; both the artists and the patrons of such work are also scornfully berated. People whose characters are not approved of among their peers in the society are cynically likened to such works; or humorously called by the name of such works.

Caution must however be exercised in using public comments to judge the acceptability of outdoor sculpture. For instance, in some cases, idiomatic expressions, which are just suitable to drive home a point being raised in unrelated issues in some cases, are coined from outdoor sculpture. A look at this Yoruba idiomatic expression: *O duro gbain-in bi Sojadumota*, (He stands erect like the Idumota cenotaph) explains this point clearly. This expression does not infer any negative artistic blunder in the sculpture, rather it merely adopts the manner of the military poise in the work comparatively to describe the action of the person in reference at the time.

The foregoing notwithstanding, caution must also be applied in the assessment of public attitudes toward the use of outdoor sculpture in the Southwest because of the recent sociological problem in the country. The problem in reference is anchored on the socio-political and economic depression, manifesting in oppressive rule and fraudulent practices among the ruling class; it has plunged many Nigerians into armed robbery and indolence. Further reaction to the maligned social situation has been severe on public outlook on national matters. Thus, it has injected wrong attitudes such as apathy, resentment, indifference and egocentrism into the country's value system. The attitude is now commonly referred to as the "Nigerian factor" [8].

The attitude has taken its toll on every facets of human development in Southwestern Nigeria. For instance, there is the lack of trust in the governments, which mismanage the public funds resulting in the nation's battered economy. This has promoted frustration, resentment and open condemnation for government project that is not linkable with the provision of food for the masses. For this reason, outdoor sculpture projects in the Southwest in the 1990s, mainly sponsored by the government, were also not spared from public attack. Recently, when outdoor sculptures were unveiled, the sculptures hardly elicit the likes of the tumultuous applause of the 1960s to the early 1990s. While some members of the public were indifferent to it, many viewed such a project as an avenue to steal the tax payer's money. Thus, rather than acknowledging its function in nation building, it is resented. A quick look, for example, at the suspected fraud in the production of the Sagamu obelisk perhaps explains this attitude better.

At Remo Division, an obelisk of about 180cm (Figure 1) was made in reinforced concrete and erected in front of the Akarigbo palace in Sagamu. The obelisk was made in 1977, commemorating the twenty fifth years coronation anniversary of Oba Awolesi as a decoration for the palace. Although the obelisk was hailed for its beauty in the environment, yet the Akarigbo chiefs who supervised the project were badly criticized. The public believed the money

expended on the project was too much. They suspected fraud and resented the fraudulent acts of the chiefs openly.



Figure 1 An Obelisk, cement, height: 450 approx., 1977, erected in front of Akarigbo's Palace, Sagamu. Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007.

According to Isiaka Adekoja (of Torigbowo compound, Itunsokun, Ofin, Sagamu in 2007), a musician in the town popularly known as Jimoh composed a song frequently sung in the seventies on the issue. The song casts aspersion on the chiefs for their suspected fraudulent act. The song goes thus in Ijebu dialect:

“Dede owo ruwon fibo, Kiti gogoro sile Oba, won owo ti tan’le. Dede won’gbo nile won bere ereke yo, Soju idi gbon pepe”.

“Upon all the money used in constructing the obelisk at the King’s palace, they said money has finished in the public treasury. All the people (the chiefs) whose descendants never live long now begin to have robust checks and big buttocks”.

In this song, the reckless suspected spending and looting of public treasury by the Akarigbo chiefs were exposed. Customarily, the Yoruba do not hide criminality. Any culprit detected will instantly be disowned, punished or even banished. In this case of the obelisk project, the chiefs were taunted severally in the song of Jimoh, and until today, the issue is still remembered. Be that as it may, a large number of the public still applaud good outdoor sculptures and crave for more.

2 Operational Definition of Attitudes and Application

Attitude is a behavioural pattern of people (individual or group). Sometimes, it may be verbalised or gesticulated in varying form. Attitude may be formed through impulse, either as direct or indirect responses to situations. When an attitude is well formed, it becomes a way of life of an individual or culture of a group of people as the case may be. However, an attitude practiced among group of people may persist or short-live depending on the mood of time.

Assessment of attitudes should be approached with caution. This is due to psychologically implication of some attitudes which may not be physically assessed. Nonetheless, some attitudes are quantifiable physically. For this reason, assessment of attitudes could be done in two ways. These are scientific and quantitative and qualitative method of assessments. The scientific method is more viable for the assessment of attitudes that inclined more on psychology while quantitative and qualitative could be used for attitudes that may be physically assessed. The later method has been chosen to measure attitudes in the practice of outdoor sculpture in Southwestern Nigeria because of its prevailing practical nature.

Analysis of attitude in the production of sculpture is made here to shed more light on the assessment of the works since the stakeholders have no formal forum where art works might be discussed other than collaborating at different stages, therefore the analysis has been based on stage by stage basis of the procedures in making outdoor sculptures. The different stages involved are the pre-unveiling, unveiling and post-unveiling stages.

3 Pre-unveiling Stage

The principal aim of the use of outdoor sculpture is to adorn public open spaces and bring to memory the ubiquitous past, which inspires patriotism and reassurance of corporate entity. Production of outdoor sculpture therefore must entail a mutual agreement of the primary stakeholders, the patron, the artist and the audience. Their agreements are based on certain parameters that could facilitate effective handling and good execution of the sculpture. These parameters are discussed in this sub-section.

3.1 Categories of Artists

Outdoor sculpture artists in the Southwest can be categorized into two broad groups. The first group is those who were trained in the formal schools of art. The second are the self trained. Each of the groups have peculiar attitude in the practice of outdoor sculpture. The formal school trained artists acquired their skills in different art schools at home and abroad, obtaining different levels of certificates; ranging from Ordinary Diploma, (OND), Higher National Diploma (HND), National Certificate of Education (NCE) to University Degrees. There are no holders of master of Fine Art (MFA) degree in Sculpture among those who made outdoor sculptures in the zone. Perhaps, this is the reason that many of the works are substandard. Holders of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) degree and Professor of Art History whose training could provide good concept in them are few. Except, Bodun Sodehinde who had bagged a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) degree in Art History (not in sculpture) before executing *Welcome (Awon Agba meta)*. Tiri Oladimeji and Moses Akintonde had already made all their public outdoor sculptures in the zone before they obtained Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) degree in Art History in 2000 and 2009 respectively.

Larger numbers of outdoor sculptures were made by holders of Higher National Diploma (HND) and first degree while their Ordinary National Diploma (OND) counterparts mostly engaged in architectural embellishment sculpture. The OND certificate holder sculptors usually operate their studios by the roadside on popular streets. They charge little fees for their works. Statues may be made for a paltry sum of around ten thousand Naira (₦10,000 = \$1,359) in the 90s and between fifty and hundred thousand (₦50,000 = \$263 and ₦100,000 = \$526) currently, depending on how skillful the artist is in salesmanship. This, many of them opined is to “keep body and soul together”. Many patrons usually exploit this situation and patronized them more than the higher degree holder sculptors.

Indeed, few road side sculptors in the Southwest are highly skilled while some degree holders sculptors demonstrate a high level of mediocrity. For example, *Are Onakakanfo* Oyabi made by T.K. Samson and Akinorun (Figure 2) made by Bayo Okunlola both degree holders are very low in standard comparatively to the *Statue of a man (untitled)* (Figure 3) made by Akinlonu, an excellent roadside artist. In few instances, some of the road side sculptors have also acquired more education in art studies at the HND and bachelors degree levels. Banjo Busuyi a sculptor in Ijebu-ode, Oni Ibitoye of Able Creation Studio, at Lister Area, Ring Road Ibadan as at 2007 studied for higher degrees in art at various art institutions in Nigeria.



Figure 2 Bayo Okunlola, *Akinorun*, cement, height: 180m, 1992, Ikirun. Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007.



Figure 3 Akinlonu, Statue of a man, fibreglass, height 180cm, 2007, Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007.

The graduate sculptors do not operate full-time studios. They are either serving in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) or holding teaching or academic appointments in tertiary institutions where their studios are located. The members of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) who are outdoor sculptors are generally peculiar in attitude across the nation. However, the peculiarity is perhaps more noticeable in the Southwest. Usually, some National Youth Service Corps members who are artists applied for permission to undertake beautification project as part of their community development project where they serve: Many outdoor sculptures in the Southwest were results of such projects. Some of them were actually commissioned by the Government to do outdoor sculpture for the beautification of state capitals or local government headquarters. For instance, Akah Bunak made six outdoor sculptures for the Osun State Government, Kunle Sheriki had three, Obi Madu had two while Okey Agu also made one public outdoor sculpture for the Government of Oyo State on contract. Anagoro made one in Okitipupa. The statue of *Tribute to Excellence* at Alausa Ikeja and many others in different locations in Lagos State were made by NYSC members at different times. From observation, remunerations for this group of outdoor sculptors are low. In some cases, they are mere compensations. It has been observed that NYSC officers who assist in

securing such contracts usually take a large portion of the contracts fees surreptitiously. In some cases, artists were arm-twisted to release a good portion of outdoor sculpture contract fees by their supervising officer as a condition of helping them secure more commissions or future permanent employment. In Osun State, according to Chuka of Guardian Newspaper, Akah Bunak was said to be exploited greatly by the agent who helped him secure outdoor sculpture commission in 1992 [9].



Figure 4 Akah Bunak, *Unknown Soldier*, cement, height: 250cm, 1992, Bode Osi. Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2004.



Figure 5 Oke Agu, *Farmer*, cement, height: 180cm, 1998, Secretariat, Ibadan. Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007.

Occasionally, many NYSC members donated public outdoor sculptures, in anticipation of immediate employment in their respective states of primary assignment, as reward for their hard work and generosity. They also do this, to make enough work available in their profile to help attract patrons for future engagements, and sometimes to earn them NYSC state or national award or commendation. Akintonde Moses was also a benefactor of the idea for the sculpture he produced for Ondo State Government in 1985 he was given a certificate of commendation by the government for his effort.

Some of the works of the artists are quite successful while many are of low quality. Akah Bunak's works, in Osun State (Figures 4), Okey Agu's work in Oyo State (Figure 5) and Etu Nwaradi in Ogun State are few samples of skillfully made works by NYSC artists in the Southwest. The work in front of Osogbo City Stadium Outer Court (Figure 6) before it was removed in 2010 and the image of NYSC corps member in Ede, Osun State are samples of poor works made by NYSC members.



Figure 6 Unity and Development of Youths in *Osun State*, cement, height: 150cm approx., 1992, Osogbo Township Stadium. Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2004.

Lecturers of Fine Art who teach Art in tertiary institutions are observed to be more successful generally in the production of outdoor sculpture in the region [9]. Most of their works are located within their base but some are outside their immediate environment. This set of sculptors seldom initiate and look for contracts like the artists who live solely on studio practice. However, they usually receive commissions from government agents and individuals. The workshop-trained artists in their own cases are young people who usually apprenticed themselves to a master. Their works are limited to water fountains and architectural accompaniments.

3.2 Patrons

Other important stakeholders in the practice of outdoor sculpture are the patrons. The governments at all three levels are the foremost patrons of the public outdoor sculpture in the Southwest. Although the impact of Federal Government is not well felt in the art, in the zone, nevertheless, the government is responsible for the early ones made in the zone. Nonetheless, the state and the local governments are the major patrons of outdoor sculptures in the zone. Corporate bodies and charitable organizations such as Rotary International, Lion Club and other local clubs as well as individuals such as Lady Bank Anthony Bola Ige, Bisi Akande Cornelius Adebayo and some national Youth Service Corps members among others have also sponsored a few number of outdoor sculptural figures in the Southwest.

The patrons' major contribution to the production and development of contemporary outdoor sculpture is in line with Griender's observation [10]. Patrons in the Southwest identify competent artists for art commissions and dictate what they want and how they want it. Their briefings also form the basic information needed by the artist to shape the work. The patrons critique the works as the work progresses. Their observations are cross-checked by the artists who may adjust the forms of their works in line with the patrons' needs. Thus, at the subconscious level, patrons are also parts of the creation of outdoor sculptures. They help form and sustain conventions on which themes, icons and the individual style are nurtured. For instance, the late Orangun of Ila, Oba Williams Adetona Ayeni had to dress in sacred regalia of Ajagunnla, the founder of Ila, and had his photographs taken for the use of the artist who made the statue of Ajagunnla.

3.3 Commissioning of Public Sculpture

Commissioning of work is also based upon a patron searching for an appropriate artist for his work. He dictates the details of outdoor sculpture he wants to the artist. This detail is usually sketchy. The artist considers it and enters into agreement on a fixed price and time of submission. Sometimes details of work for execution, such as working drawing, models and types of materials are not given by the artist. The details such as, concept of work and choice of material in outdoor sculpture execution are usually left to the artist by patrons who trust the artist's competence to decide. Except in very few instances, such as the making of *Iya Osun*, *Baba Onisekere* in Osogbo, *Ayo Ojewumi Statue* in Ilobu, *Oduduwa* in Ile-ife *etcetera*, many other outdoor sculpture execution details were decided by the artists who made them [9]. However commissioning details are rarely scrutinized and faithfully pursued. With the detailed information on the artist disposal, he fused it into a chosen

conventional iconography in a style peculiar to him. The audience (the patron inclusive), the final assessor of the work engaged the sculpture in dialogue and pronounced their verdict on it in some ways which may be positive or negative [10]. Thus the three groups – the patrons, the artists and the audience, usually reach a compromise to produce an acceptable and long lasting monument for the public. When the artist – the anchor of the agreement-derailed from main course of execution (the thematic and morphological interpretation as well as stylistic rendition), rejection of the work or a possible litigation against the artist's unsatisfactory conduct may ensued. Sometimes, a patron, on his own part, may be guilty of not releasing funds to the artist. This could lead to prolonged time wasting, lack of concentration and eventual poor production of work.

Pricing of work is usually ignorantly made by the patron and the artist without any recourse to the intrinsic, cultural and market values which are prevalent factors in art work pricing. Sometimes, when both parties understood the mode of art pricing, a self centered party may outwits the other. This attitude has resulted in some ways in poor execution of outdoor sculptures as well as impoverishment of good artists who might be under paid or under compensated for their works [9].

Comparatively, the mode of commissioning outdoor sculpture in the zone is yet to reach the sophistication level of traditional Yoruba sculpture as well as the outdoor sculpture practice of America and Europe. Usually the parameters observed in the commissioning of traditional Yoruba sculpture are high. For example, the Yoruba community, the patrons of sculptures did not just engage any artist to execute a work. Professional artists with proven credentials were usually commissioned to execute public art projects [2].

Art patrons in the traditional Yoruba society knew good artists and they approached them whenever their services were needed. Sometimes, competitive commissioning for public art projects may be organized to help identify the best artists who could execute certain projects [2]. This trend usually spurs the artists to give their best to the community. Usually, artists were well remunerated in cash and kind. The artists in their own cases believed they were part of the community whose pride they also shared. This major consideration also encouraged artists to give their best. The community, in turn, values the art works produced by the professionals greatly. The works were also accepted as public property. They were protected and preserved in some Yoruba oral traditions [11].

The modes of commissioning outdoor sculptures to artists in the United States of America and some advanced counties the world over are similar to the

traditional Yoruba type. However, there are marked differences in some details and variation. In the Euro-American countries, artists are thoroughly scrutinized by art regulating bodies for professional competence before they can be commissioned to produce public outdoor sculptures. For outdoor sculptures in the United State of America are treated, like other social products, that require appropriate standard for public consumption. In this case, outdoor sculpture has to be aesthetically and functionally pleasing to the different public strata; and at the same time, it must not be politically or socially offensive to the entire community [12]. Vietnam memoriam Monument erected in the USA is a good example of the procedure taken in Euro-American countries in the commissioning of outdoor sculpture. At least, one thousand four hundred and twenty one entries were submitted for the project before the jury of eight prominent architects, sculptors, and landscape designers judged Meya Lee entry as the best [10]. From this example, it implies, art works meant for public places, particularly outdoor sculpture must be carefully planned, commissioned; executed and presented to the public with utmost realization of intrinsic and extrinsic aesthetic pleasantness to justify the public money. Besides this, in advanced countries, legal provisos are put in place to guide both the execution of outdoor sculpture and its use. For instance Hoffman [12] observes that the artist's right on violation of legal bond on his work is guaranteed within the artist's lifetime. The rule stipulates that public art should be subjected to public reassessment over a period of time to test its validity in the public value. If it fails, then the public may order its removal.



Figure 7 Aerial view of the New Tinubu Square, Lagos. Photograph by Ayo Akinyemi, 2013.

Conversely, most outdoor sculptures in the Southwest of Nigeria were not subjected to any rigorous legal exercise before conception and after execution. The Nigerian government has not set any rule for the commission and maintenance of outdoor sculptures. If there are rules, at all, they have, however

not been operated. The same should apply to the society of Nigeria Artists (SNA) and allied bodies that have not had any role or control in the practice of public outdoor sculpture in the country. For lack of proper coordination in the commissioning of outdoor sculpture, environmental beautification, the primary objective of the use of outdoor sculpture, is hardly achieved. Professional bodies of Town planners, architects, civil engineers and other allied professions also hardly have any inputs in the planning, commissioning, production, location, erection and the maintenance of outdoor sculptures in the Southwest. Nonetheless, the Fajuyi Park in Ado Ekiti and new Tinubu Square in Lagos (Figure 7) and a few others are good examples of appropriate government input in public outdoor sculpture production and maintenance.

3.4 Production

Production stage of outdoor sculpture largely takes place in the studios of artists across the Southwest. Many of them are a room size, make shift studios. Some artists like Moses Akintonde operate inside temporary booth, car booth or in the open air at their backyards. Quiet a number of artists such as Akinlonu in Lagos, Busuyi in Ijebu-Ode and Banjo in Ibadan operate by the roadside. There are also a few number of artists whose studios are large, well organized and managed by group of artists employed by owners of such studios. Abuede studio in Sogunle, Bolaji studio at Iyana-paja former OX4 Aquarium Company, Onipanu, all in Lagos State are few examples. These types of studios are not found in other parts of the Southwest.

Generally, sculptures are made with plastic materials such as prepared clay, gypsum, polyester resin and wax as well as ferrous and non ferrous irons. Tools used by the artists are set of imported or locally made wooden or iron spatulas and other common hand tools such as; hammer, mallet, pair of pliers, hack saw, chisel, *etcetera*. Light equipment like welding machine, grinder, powered saw and other types were commonly used by the artists.

Usually, artists in the zone work with little assistance from welder or bricklayer or both. However, in some instances, associate artists executed a work jointly with each member of the group handling different aspect of production. *Ogbomoso: Land of Valiants* made by Kalilu and Associates and the statue of *Mobolaji Bank Anthony* produced by a group of ten artists are few examples. At production, construction of sculpture starts in gradual process; from the sketches to the model of the conceived idea. This progresses to a mature state in the desired medium. The work is given any type of patina such as – metallic bronze, lamp black gloss colour and shades of green colour. In few instances, polychrome colours are also used.

The sculpture is invariably moved to the designated location for erection. In many instances, transportation and erection of statues in the Southwest were done manually. However, there were cases in which cranes as well as hydraulic equipment mounted on trucks were used for transporting works to locations and for erection. Since outdoor sculptures are produced primarily to beautify the public environment, officially, its location and erection should also have professional inputs from town planners, architects, civil engineers and other allied professionals. However, Akintonde [13] observed that allied professional body seldom make any contribution in the process culminating into poor production and display of work. Primarily, location of any outdoor sculpture is under the ambience of the town planning office that is saddled with the responsibility of urban planning, control and maintenance of the Nigerian environment [14]. Akintonde [13] has already discussed this issue in relation to conformity with the land development directive by stakeholders.

The cumulative effects of all these shortcomings induced environmental degradation rather than environmental edification. The manners in which the poor control of outdoor sculpture development affects its use in the Southwest of Nigeria have also been discussed by Akintonde [13] who observed family commission process, poor conception and execution of project, inappropriate site selection for monument and some cases of unprofessionally erection of works, various abuse against and lack of maintenance scheme for the public sculpture. However some examples of the attitudes still suffice in the present study.

Nonetheless, in achieving the main objective of the use of outdoor sculpture, appropriate location must be decided by all the stake holders in the production of outdoor sculpture and approved by the town planning authority. For instance, the location of a statue must be carefully selected to correspond to the theme expressed in the work. The size of the space available in a location must also correspond to the size of the statue; so also must the statue be erected in the best angle it can be properly viewed and appreciated by members of the public. It must not also obstruct traffic flow or impinge the services of other public infrastructures such as pipe-borne water, electricity, *etcetera*. However, this consideration is not usually effected in the studied zone.

Selection of site for erection of outdoor sculptures in the Southwest is usually done by patrons in most cases. Sometimes, artists may also suggest sites that seem appropriate. In the situations where a family in a community pays for the production of an outdoor sculpture, site very close to their compound were often chosen for the erection of such works in conjunction with the Yoruba practice on such issues. In the traditional Yoruba art, memorial sculptures were usually located proximally to the abode or specific point where the god, ancestor or a

deceased person resided or performed an important feat in his or her life time. This is significant to the meaning of the work as it confers an aura of sacredness and sanctity on the work and the environment. Such works are better enjoyed and appreciated by the audiences who have profound knowledge of the personality whose image is represented; while the less enlightened public generally appreciate their physical beauty. This idea was clearly demonstrated in the location of some outdoor sculptural works in Ijebu Ode (Figure 8) and Ijebu Igbo (Figure 9).



Figure 8 Obelisk in memory of Chief (Otunba) E. O. Okunowo, the Bobasunwa of Ijebuland and Otunba (Mrs.) Comfort Adenike, cement height: 420cm approx., 2002, Ijebu-Ode. Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2006.



Figure 9 *Image of Beje*, cement, height: 150cm, Ijebu-Igbo. Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2006

While the locations of many public outdoor sculptures were deliberately planned, many were carelessly chosen, making the works to lose some steam in meaning and order. For example in the case of the statue of *Iba Oluyole* (Figure 10) in Ibadan, hot controversies trailed its location after its erection [9]. Some people believed the statue should have been erected at a spot along the way to Mapo Hill Beere, very close to the compound of Iba Oluyole. Due to poor control of site selection for public outdoor sculpture, works were sometimes erected where they ought not to be. Often, outdoor sculptures erected in such places are usually obstructed by the existing infrastructure on the location. For example, the statue of *Akinorun*, the founder of Ikirun (Figure 2) made by Bayo Okunlola in 1993 was completely submerged and overshadowed by electric poles and signposts which has been on the same location there, before the

erection of the statue. The sculpture titled *Welcome to Ondo State* at Owena was also erected in a poor location [13]. Similarly, many public outdoor sculptures were poorly erected while a few were properly positioned. Many of the works are erected on a very low pedestal that could not support good optical assessment.



Figure 10 Tiri Oladimeji, *Iba Oluyole*, cement, height: 300m, 1987, Beere, Photograph by Femi Akande, 2015.

4 Unveiling Stage

The unveiling ceremonies of outdoor sculpture are usually tied to other ceremonies such as: Coronation anniversary, township days, commemoration ceremony period of specific personality, founding of societies, association and institutions. Sometime government commissioned outdoor sculptures alongside other important projects or political party propagandic campaigns. During the unveiling ceremony, guests are drawn from all sectors of the public. As in other important ceremonies, the government officials, royal fathers, chiefs, elites, civil organisations are invited. Their main function is to accompany personality such as ministers, governors, local government chairman, royal fathers or any other eminent personality that may be given the task to officially unveil a statue as in the example in (Figures 11 and 12).



Figure 11 Moses Akintonde, the sculptor, *Ajagunla* being introduced to the Royal fathers at the unveiling ceremony of a the statue in Ila-Orangun Photograph by Oluwole Hassan, 1987.



Figure 12 Late Chief Bola Ige and the artist (Moses Akintonde) who made the statue of *Aje* during unveiling ceremony of the statue in Ila-Orangun (Coutesy: Wale Adewoletan, 2000).

Unveiling ceremony is usually brief; with audience in attendance (Figure 13). A short ceremony is held at the statue site during which address are made before a tape is either cut or a cellophane veil on the statue is removed to declare the sculpture opened. The audience responded with a shout of approval when the

veil is removed from the statue, if the work is satisfactory. If otherwise, the audience simply disapproves of it in low or loud voices depending on the composition of the audience.

The audiences of outdoor sculpture are those who have interest in art works generally. They assess the sculpture and appreciate it. The audience of outdoor sculpture may be divided into three, *viz*: the artist, the patron, those who have knowledge on the art and the public. Firstly, the artist as an audience, looks at his work, critiques it and enjoys it even after execution. The patron also appreciates the art and derives satisfaction if the work is good, or, pass judgment on the work. All the audience have different attitudes towards outdoor sculpture. However, the professionals in art business, students under art training as well as art connoisseurs have been the most vocal in the assessment of outdoor sculpture.



Figure 13 Mammoth audience during the unveiling ceremony of the statue of Aje in Ila-Orangun (Coutesy: Wale Adewoletan, 2000).

In Nigeria, apart from some daily newspaper and magazine reports on commissioned works, with some flash points on the artists and a few comments on the poor management of public outdoor sculpture which usually do not assess works in any appreciable details [9], there is no formal forum where assessment of work may be discussed by the audience. Much of the patrons' assessments are verbalized individually, or in a gathering of relaxed friends and associates. It is just recently that outdoor sculpture appraisal is being discussed

in students' thesis and journal articles [9]. Such exercises are too few in number when compared with audience participation in painting in Nigeria and the assessment of outdoor sculpture in the advanced countries.



Figure 14 Damage part of the Cenotaph of *Unknown Soldier*, cement, height: 180cm, 1992, Oke Moli, Ibadan. Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007.

The attitude of the audience towards assessment of outdoor sculpture in the Southwest are varied. Realism figures are highly favoured by the audience. More than ninety percent of the public outdoor sculptures in the zone were either expressed in realism or idealized realism. This attitude in art representation and its acceptance by the audience seem to be a continuation of the Yoruba traditional wood carving style expressed mainly in idealized realism. It is only in Ilorin, a predominantly Yoruba inhabited town in the North Central Nigeria that the audiences accept complete abstraction of outdoor sculptures in preference to figure sculptures. This however is an attitude promoted by the Muslim aversion to figural sculptures. But Hammed Jimoh the Head of Department of Art and Culture Centre, Ilorin in 2008, hinged the attitude on religious fanaticism. He says there is nothing wrong in figural representation in public outdoor sculpture, noting that it could not lead to idolatry as some Muslims believed. Jaji, a sculptor, whose works in the public environment in Ilorin were destroyed in 1984 by some people believed to be

Muslims, and Saburi Adebisin an outdoor sculptor in Abeokuta also affirmed this fact.

Attitude of the audience toward the cenotaphs of the *Unknown Soldier* during military regimes of General Ibrahim Babangida and General Sanni Abacha in some cities of the Southwest were violent or humorous. In some instances, the cenotaph of *Unknown Soldier* were pulled down damaged or humorously dressed in *agbada* (a civilian male garment) to express resentment against military rule. For example, the cenotaphs of *Unknown soldier* at Aramoko Ekiti and the one at *Odo-Ori* in Iwo were dressed in civilian garments during the military administration in 1993. In the same vein the cenotaph figure at Government House Annex, Oke-fia Osogbo and the one at Oke Moli-Duge Ibadan were also damaged (Figure 14).

5 Post Un-veiling

Public outdoor sculpture being produced for the public aesthetic recreation benefits are opened to various lawful interactions after unveiling. Public contact with the sculptures should however, be controlled to ward off various



Figure 15 Refuse dump at the environment of *Tai Solarin*, at Yaba Market, Yaba, Lagos. Photograph by Sola Ogunfuwa, 2007.



Figure 16 A trader took over the site of *Are Ona-Kakanfo Oyabi* statue in Oyo town. Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2006.

types of abuse which are detrimental to the spirit of a well organised and orderly society. But various cases of abuse against public outdoor sculpture which Akintonde [15] has explicated still persist. The main cause of this problem is the non establishment of necessary scheme for protection and maintenance of the public sculpture images and lack of the political will to allow sanctions

against offenders. Against this background many public sculpture sites are usually unkempt. They are always filthy (Figure 15) and overtaken by destitute and miscreants. In some cases, it is the street hawkers and traders who usually display their wares on sale around statues' area with impunity (Figures 16). Government agents despondently, contemptuously allow their political campaign posters and banners to be pasted or tied on the images (Figure 17). Religious groups, commercial institution and individuals in the public are also involved in defacing the public sculptures in the same way. Certainly, the government insensitiveness to the well being of the public sculpture makes the art unattractive, lacking in value and almost futile in urban renewal effort; therefore, an albatross to the development of the art.



Figure 17 Political campaign posters pasted on *Ikare hills' statue* in Ikare, Ondo State. Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007.

6 Conclusion

The practice of public outdoor sculpture in the Southwestern Nigeria has a lot of attitudes vital to the development of modern art in the country. Identification and analysis of the various attitudes in this study reflect some high professional discipline in some artists who had formal education in art and who have also acquired experience in art business over some period of time. However, while

works of some experienced and up-coming university and polytechnic graduate were rich in conception and technical proficiency, works of many fresh graduates in this group, serving in the National Service Corps Scheme portrayed some level of mediocrity. Ironically, works of some artists with low formal education are high in standard.

Patron's approach to consideration for standard when commissioning works in many cases are still frost with error of judgment and sometimes display of corrupt tendencies. These attitudes have not helped the proper growth of sculpture as in the traditional art. The governments at various levels also lack the political will to control the production and uses of outdoor sculptures. They have not been able to control other attitude particularly abuse and poor maintenance of outdoor sculpture inimical to the growth of the art. As a result of the foregoing, the untoward attitudes against outdoor sculpture across the zone are fast becoming alarming. Although, currently marred with some negative attitudes, yet the use of outdoor sculptures in the public space of Southwest of Nigeria metropolis still fulfilled its functions. Effort on the practice could only be improved upon with more proactive attention by government to protect the sanctity of the art.

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